



## **ELT MENTORS' AND MENTEES' AWARENESS LEVELS OF SOCIAL SKILLS IN THEIR PROFESSION**

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### **Abstract:**

The debate over the qualifications that a teacher should have has long been going on and the discussions among scholars have gone far beyond academic skills of teachers as a result of emerging concepts, one of which is the social skills. In the field of English language teaching, these skills seem crucial as the learning environment additionally causes difficulty for the learners since they both try to learn a language and try to overcome their fears and anxiety at the same time. It becomes more crucial for the language teachers to provide a fruitful and most importantly relaxing environment in which social and lifelong learning can take place. Similarly, for the English teacher mentors and mentees who continuously hold conversations and are in the process of planning and decision making about building self- esteem and boosting motivation; setting goals and finding the best ways to achieve goals; coping with every possible situation in the language classroom, having social skills seem to be of great importance. The purpose of this study is to deal with the first step of a social skills training program for English mentors and mentees; and specifically search into the level of awareness of English teacher mentors and mentees towards social skills in teaching. The study aims to shed light on how to integrate social skills development training into teacher training curriculum in the field of English Language Teaching.

**Keywords:** ELT mentors' awareness, ELT and mentees' awareness, awareness levels, social skills

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Social Skills

Social skills which can be defined as the adoption of social values, development of a sense of personal identity, acquisition of interpersonal skills, learning how to regulate personal behavior in accordance with societal expectations, planning and decision making, and development of cultural competence have been considered among the major qualifications that teachers should possess. Social skills have been defined differently by different scholars. Michelson et al. (1985) define social skills as "*the combination of skills to praise others, complain when disagreeing upon a certain issue, denying another person's requests/demand, exchanging experiences, giving suggestions to others, problem or conflict resolution, interact or work with others of the opposite sex and a number of other behaviors*". For Gresham et al (2006) social skills "*represent a set of competencies that (1) facilitate initiating and maintaining positive social relationships, (2) contribute to peer acceptance and friendship development, (3) result in satisfactory school adjustment and (4) allow individuals to cope with and adapt to the demands of the social environment*". From Gresham and Elliott's perspective social skills can be defined on the basis of five clusters: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. For Hops (1983), social skills refer to the "*type of behaviors displayed in social situations*". From another perspective social skills "*represent a broader range of abilities that is most closely linked to the construct of social intelligence and they include the ability to express oneself in social interactions, the ability to read and understand different social situations, knowledge of social roles, norms and scripts, interpersonal problem solving skills, and social role-playing skills*" (Reichard and Riggion, 2008). From Avcıoglu's perspective, social skills refer to the skills that help individuals to join social life and initiate interpersonal communication (2005). In addition, Avcıoglu asserts that social skills are crucial in "*achieving social goals*" (2005). Based on various definitions of the term social skills, various domains have been established. Among these, six domains of social skills proposed by Riggio (1986) have been among the most acknowledged ones. The domains seen in Riggio's Social Skills Inventory (1989) can be listed as follows:

Emotional Expressivity: Emotional expressivity refers to general skill in non-verbal sending. This dimension reflects individual's ability to express spontaneously and accurately, felt emotional states as well as the ability to nonverbally express attitudes and cues of in emotional expressivity may be able to emotionally arouse inspire others because of their ability to transmit their felt emotional states.

Emotional Sensitivity: emotional sensitivity refers to general skill in receiving and decoding the nonverbal communication of others. Individuals high in emotional sensitivity are concerned with and vigilant in observing the nonverbal emotional cues of others.

Emotional Control: The general ability to control and regulate emotional and nonverbal displays is referred to as emotional control. The individual high in emotional control is likely to be a good emotional actor, able to pose emotions on cue, and able to

use conflicting emotional cues to mask felt emotional states such as laughing appropriately at a joke.

**Social Expressivity:** Social expressivity refers to a general verbal speaking skill and an ability to engage others in social interactions. Persons high in social expressivity appear outgoing and gregarious because of their ability to initiate conversations with others.

**Social Sensitivity:** Social sensitivity refers to the ability to decode and understand verbal communication and general knowledge of the norms governing appropriate social behavior. Socially sensitive individuals are sensitive to others.

**Social Control:** Social control refers to a general skill in social self-presentation. Individuals high in social control are tactful, socially adept, and self-confident. Persons high in social control are skilled at acting, able to play various social roles, can easily take a particular stance or orientation in a discussion and they can adjust personal behavior to fit with what they consider to be appropriate to any given social situation.

## 1.2 Social Skills and Teaching

It is well-known that the qualifications teachers have affect both teaching and learning process and the learning outcomes are closely linked to many factors including the social and emotional aspects of teaching. As Sanders and Rivers (1996) claim, teacher qualifications comprise of professional competence, subject knowledge, teaching experiences and social skills. The major qualifications that teachers should possess include *"love for teaching, being positive, being understanding, being optimistic, encouraging learners, motivating learners, being sensitive to learners' needs, having knowledge of learners' emotional and social development, being open to changes and development, being flexible, and being a trouble shooter"* (Sisman, 2006 & Celep, 2004 in Turkan et. Al., 2016). In recent years, the roles that teacher candidates should possess have been grouped as (1) organization, planning, and approaches in teaching, (2) professionalism, and (3) social skills (Yuksel, 2001). Among the skills that teachers and teacher candidates should possess, social skills have received considerable amount of interest both from educators and researchers since it is believed that *"teaching is solution oriented and is associated with social skills"* (Ekici, 2016). In addition, *"in order for any teaching-learning process to be effective, it is necessary for the teachers to have a special relationship with their students and this special bond depends on teachers' communication and social skills"* (Turkan et al., 2016). For this very specific reason teacher candidates should be trained as teachers with high level of social skills (Tepeli & Ari, 2011). From Girgin et al perspective (2011), since all the sub-skills that construct social skills as a whole are closely linked to each other, it is crucial for teachers to possess all the social skills. As Jennings & Greenberg claim, teachers with high level of social skills encourage their learners, help learners to improve themselves, adopt the role of a leader and create solutions to the problems in the classroom, initiate cooperation among the learners, and create a positive classroom environment. Low levels of social skills in teachers can lead to lower student performance (2009).

### 1.3 Previous research on social skills

Studies on social skills can be traced back several decades during which the central focus was on searching into such issues as social intelligence, characteristics of social skills and assessment of social skills (Senol & Turkcapar, 2016). However- being an important variable in determining both social and academic outcomes of students and teacher performance-social skills that teachers and learners possess have been investigated from various perspectives by many researchers in educational context, as well.

In the first category of research conducted on social skills, related literature presents teachers' perceptions of social skills, whether or not to teach these skills within the classroom setting. In a study by Pavri & Monda-Amaya (2001), it was concluded that from the teachers' perspective, social skills should be taught by parents and teachers should be the facilitators of social relationships in the classroom. In another study by Bej (2016), the results indicated that teachers perceived social skills as important skills that shape an individual. In addition, the teachers stated that they viewed themselves as strong influences in encouraging good social skills. However, in previous studies, teachers reported that "*(1) they have limited information on and experience in how to teach social skills because of the emphasis placed on teaching academic skills, (2) their first responsibility is to teach academic skills, and (3) they do not have sufficient time to teach social skills in their classrooms*" (Bradley & West, 1994; Bain & Farris, 1991; Maag & Webber, 1995 in Pinar & Sucuoglu, 2013).

The second category of related research on social skills presents the results of studies searching into social skill levels of students, teachers, teacher candidates and some variables. In a study by Eliot et al (2001), the effects of social skills on education and its effects on motivation of learners were explored and the results of the study indicated that there is a significant relationship among social skills, academic success and social support. Can, Inozu, and Papaja (2015) searched into social skills of Polish and Turkish ELT students and the study concluded that similar social skills were valued by the Polish and Turkish students and similar social behaviors were manifested. In another study, Girgin et al. (2011) explored the social skills level of teacher candidates in the aspect of various variables and the results indicated meaningful relations between the sub-parts and some factors of the scale. In a study by Senol & Turkcapar (2016), prospective teachers' social skills were measured in relation to some variables. The study concluded that there was a significant difference in social skill levels of teacher candidates enrolled in different departments. Prospective preschool teachers had higher level of social skills. Social skills of prospective preschool teachers in terms of different variables were also explored by Turkan, Aydogan, and Sezer (2016). The analysis of the data revealed that there were statistically significant differences on social skills scores of prospective preschool teachers according to class level. Seniors as compared to freshmen scored higher in relation to social skills. However, no significant difference was found between social skills and academic achievement of prospective preschool teachers. In a study by Ekici (2017), preservice preschool teachers' level of problem solving and social skills were explored. The

findings of the study indicated that there was no statistically significant correlation between problem solving skills and social skills of preservice preschool teachers. In line with Ekici's study, Yazıcı (2017) searched into problem solving skills and social skills level of prospective music teachers. In his study, Tarkan concluded that the general social skills of the participants were at medium level while they were generally successful at problem solving. In a study by Hamarta (2000) social skills level of university students were investigated and the study concluded that social skills level of students was dependent on their departments. In a study by Modiri (2013), social skills level of fine arts teacher candidates were investigated. The findings indicated that teacher candidates' social skills level was medium. Agbuga (2016) investigated the social skills level of teacher candidates at physical education and sports teaching department and the study concluded that teacher candidates' social skills level was high.

In the third category of research on social skills, studies center on social skills training with references to teacher perceptions and practices. In a study by Dobbins et al (2009), the level, type and area of social skills instruction provided to general and special education teachers were explored. Results of the study indicated that general and special education teachers receive a limited amount of direct and incidental social skills instruction in their in-service training programs. In another study, Battalio & Stephens (2005) reported on a survey that evaluated special education teachers' instruction of and belief about social skills training. The teachers in the study were cognizant of the need for social skills to guarantee success not only in school but also in future postsecondary environments. In addition, Pinar and Sucuoglu (2013) investigated the effectiveness of a Social Skills Teaching Program prepared for inclusive classroom teachers. The results of the study indicated that Social Skills Teaching Program was effective on the teachers' outcomes and these effects were maintained after having completed the training. The effects of teacher training programs designed to increase teachers' awareness of social skills and their use of social skills within the classroom were also studied by many other scholars including Catron, Weiss, & Marciel (2005), Courtney (2007), and Miller et al. (2000), and these studies concluded that teacher training programs were effective in increasing social skills knowledge of teachers.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to deal with the first step of a social skills training program for English mentors and mentees; and specifically search into the level of awareness of English teacher mentors and mentees towards social skills in teaching. The study aims to shed light on how to integrate social skills development training into teacher training curriculum in the field of English language teaching (ELT). For this purpose, the following research questions were under investigation:

1. Are Turkish ELT mentors aware of the importance of social skills in their profession?

2. Are Turkish ELT mentees aware of the importance of social skills in their profession?
3. Do Turkish ELT mentors and mentees differ in their awareness level of social skills?

### **1.5 The significance of the study**

In the field of ELT, social skills seem crucial as the learning environment additionally causes difficulty for the learners since they both try to learn a language and try to overcome their fears and anxiety at the same time. And in this respect, there is a need in Turkish context to integrate social skills training in teacher education programs. As in the other fields of teaching, social skills that English teacher mentors and mentees should possess, when and how they should use the necessary social skills should be well defined and investigated before integrating social skills training into curriculum of teacher training programs. For this reason, this study aims to contribute to the field by presenting a case in Turkish context.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

Mixed methods research approach was used in this study. In this research, the aim was to find out the social skills levels of both ELT mentors and mentees and how much awareness they have in this topic; therefore, to collect data both Social Skills Inventory and semi-structured interviews were being conducted. Therefore, the data collected through an inventory, made the study quantitative and analyzed through descriptive statistics, and content analysis made the study qualitative together with the semi-structured interview which made the study quantitative also.

### **2.2 Participants**

The data for the present study were collected from two groups of participants: 72 ELT major mentees enrolled in ELT Department at four different universities in Turkey and 10 ELT mentors working at ELT Departments of 7 different universities in Turkey. ELT mentees were seniors who were about to graduate from their departments in the year data were collected. At the time of data collection, mentees have had completed departmental courses including teaching principles and approaches in teaching in the field of ELT. In their second year at university, they had "practice teaching" and each had the experience of working with a mentor in their department. Data for the current study were collected when mentees were in the process of "teaching practice" in their senior year at university. ELT mentors had at least 10 years of teaching experience and 7 years of mentoring experience. The age and gender of the participants were not taken into consideration in the analysis of data.

### **2.3 Data collection tools**

In this study, two types of data collection tools were used: The Social Skills Inventory designed by Riggio (1986) and adopted to Turkish by Yüksel (2004) and semi-structured interviews.

### **2.4 The Social Skills Inventory**

The Social Skills Inventory was designed by Riggio (1986) and adopted to Turkish by Yüksel (2004). In the current study, Turkish version of the inventory was used to avoid any miscomprehension of the items by the participants. The inventory consists of 90 items and these items measure social skills in six domains: emotional expressiveness, emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social expressiveness, social sensitivity, and social control. Each domain in the inventory consists of 15 questions structured in the 1 to 5 Likert Scale format. The lowest and the highest marks one can get from the total skills inventory are 90 and 450 respectively. For each domain, one can get minimum 15 and maximum 75 points. As expected, low marks represent low levels of social skills while high marks indicate high social skills level of a participant. The value of Cronbach's alpha for each domain in the scale was calculated and for each domain values were above .70 except the first domain. (EE: .58, ES: .78, EC: .74, SE: .82, SS: .79, SC: .81), which indicated the internal consistency of the scale.

### **2.5 Semi-structured interviews**

The second data collection tool for the present study was the semi-structured interviews held with 20 mentees and 10 mentors. The participants for the semi-structured interviews were chosen on a voluntary basis. The researcher asked both pre-determined and follow up questions during the interviews which lasted around 20 minutes. In the interview session, participants were asked the following questions:

- Could you elaborate on the relationship between teachers' social skills and their in-class teaching practices?
- On the basis of Social Skills Inventory, could you please evaluate yourself as a language teacher? For which of the dimensions do you find yourself more effective?
- What contributions would becoming aware of your own social skills level have in your teaching?
- All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim

### **2.6 Data analysis**

The data gathered for this study were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The data obtained from the Social Skills Inventory were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) software version 19.0. As the first step of quantitative data analysis procedure, normality assumptions were checked with Shapiro-Wilk Test and Q-Q Plots. In addition, correlations of six dimensions of the Social Skills Inventory both for all participants and mentees were calculated to see whether there was a correlation among the dimensions. To analyze the semi-structured

interviews, content analysis was utilized. Content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Weber, 1990) was started by categorizing them from the codes for each set of data which was related to a specific question. All the categories and themes taken from the content analysis were double-checked by both researchers to have a significant degree of inter-rater reliability.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Results of the Social Skills Inventory

As the first step of quantitative data analysis procedure, normality assumptions were checked with Shapiro-Wilk Test and Q-Q Plots and the data were found to be normal ( $p>.05$ ). Outlier values were controlled with the help of Skewness and Kurtosis calculations and 7 outliers were excluded from the further analysis with the use of z values. To see the social skills level of both mentors and mentees, descriptive statistics was utilized. In addition, correlations of six dimensions of the Social Skills Inventory both for all participants and mentees were calculated to see whether there was a correlation among the dimensions. It is noteworthy to mention that, correlations of six dimensions of the Social Skills Inventory were not calculated for mentors since the number of mentor participants was limited to 10 and this could not have been representative of the group. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for all participants with a focus on minimum, maximum and mean scores for each dimension.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics for All Participants

	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Emotional Expressivity (EE)	82	25	58	46.01	6.97
Emotional Sensitivity (ES)	82	27	68	49.77	8.19
Emotional Control (EC)	82	25	63	42.41	8.66
Social Expressivity (SE)	82	24	68	45.49	10.02
Social Sensitivity (SS)	82	25	61	44.47	8.53
Social Control (SC)	82	28	72	54.53	8.36

When we analyze the results in Table 1 which displays social skills levels of all participants for each subscale, we see that participants of the current study fall into the medium category on all six domains of the social skills inventory. However, a detailed analysis of the dimensions of the social skills scale reveals some noteworthy results, one of which is the mean score of "social control" ( $M = 54.53$ ). It is seen in Table 1 that the highest mean score belongs to participants' social control level. This high level of social control might be interpreted as an indication of participants' skills in social self-presentation. We might infer that mentors and mentees in this study are better at acting, playing various social roles and adjusting their behavior to any given social situation as compared to skills required in other domains of the social skills scale. The lowest mean score belongs to "emotional control" level of the participants ( $M = 42.41$ ). This low level of emotional control might indicate that ELT mentors and mentees in the current study are less skilled in controlling and regulating emotional and nonverbal displays as

compared to other domains such as emotional sensitivity, social expressivity, or emotional expressivity. From a more specific perspective, participants of this study have poor skills in posing emotions on cue and using conflicting emotional cues to hide felt emotional states. We also see in Table 1 that social skills represented in the domains "emotional expressivity" ( $M= 46.01$ ), "emotional sensitivity" ( $M= 49.77$ ), "social expressivity" ( $M= 45.49$ ) and "social sensitivity" ( $M= 44.47$ ) fall into the average level ( $M= 45$ ).

Since one of the aims of the current study is to present some suggestions for teacher training programs and help both mentors and mentees become aware of their social skills level, we thought that exploring whether any of the dimensions was correlated with other dimensions. It was also assumed that such an analysis might be useful in presenting suggestions for giving priority to development of some dimensions in the teacher training programs. Table 2 presents correlations of dimensions for all participants.

**Table 2: Correlations of Dimensions for All Participants**

	EE	ES	EC	SE	SS	SC
Emotional Expressivity (EE)		.16	-.29**	.39**	.03	.26*
Emotional Sensitivity (ES)			.19	.53**	.04	.31**
Emotional Control (EC)				.02	-.30**	.27*
Social Expressivity (SE)					-.14	.54**
Social Sensitivity (SS)						-.54**
Social Control (SC)						

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

It is seen in Table 2 that there are both positive and negative correlations among some of the dimensions for all participants. The results displayed in Table 2 indicate that emotional expressivity is negatively correlated with emotional control (-.29) while it is positively correlated with emotional expressivity (.39) and social control (.26). That is, while emotional expressivity level of an individual increases, his emotional control level decreases. However, individuals who have high emotional expressivity level are also good at social expressivity and social control. We also see in Table 2 that emotional sensitivity is positively correlated with both social expressivity (.53) and social control (.31). As for emotional control, we see both negative correlation with social sensitivity (-.30) and positive correlation with social control (.27). The fourth dimension of the Social Skills Inventory - social expressivity- is negatively correlated with social sensitivity (-.14) and positively correlated with social control (.54). When we look at the results in Table 2 for social sensitivity, we see a negative correlation with social control at the level of -.54. That is, when the social sensitivity level of an individual increases, his social control level decreases. We could infer that if an individual is good at decoding and understanding verbal communication and general knowledge of the norms, they are less skilled at acting, playing various social roles and adjusting their behavior to fit any given social situation.

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics for Mentees

	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Emotional Expressivity (EE)	72	25	58	45.83	7.26	52.76
Emotional Sensitivity (ES)	72	27	68	49.87	8.22	67.49
Emotional Control (EC)	72	26	63	42.17	8.33	69.38
Social Expressivity (SE)	72	24	68	44.96	9.50	90.18
Social Sensitivity (SS)	72	28	61	45.62	8.19	67.01
Social Control (SC)	72	28	72	53.77	8.12	65.87

Table 3 displays descriptive statistics for mentees and presents the mean score for each sub scale. We see in Table 3 that the highest mean score among the dimensions belongs to "social control" ( $M=53.77$ ). That is, mentees seem to perform better in acting, playing various social roles, taking a particular stance or orientation in a discussion and adjusting personal behavior to fit with what they consider to be appropriate to any given social situation as compared to other social skills such as emotional expressivity, emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social expressivity, and social sensitivity. The second highest frequency among the sub dimensions of the social skills scale belongs to emotional sensitivity ( $M=49.87$ ), which could be inferred as mentees' performing better in observing the non-verbal emotional cues as compared to other skills such as emotional expressivity, emotional control, social expressivity, and social sensitivity. Table 3 also reveals that emotional expressivity, social expressivity, and social sensitivity share almost the same mean score ( $M= 45.83$ ,  $M=44.96$ ,  $M=45.62$  respectively). We can infer from this finding that mentees in this study perform nearly the same in expressing spontaneously and accurately, engaging others in social interactions as well as decoding and understanding verbal communication and general knowledge of the norms governing appropriate social behavior. It is noteworthy to mention that the among all the sub dimensions, the lowest mean belongs to emotional control ( $M=42.17$ ), which implies that mentees in the current study seem less skilled in controlling and regulating emotional and nonverbal displays and using conflicting emotional cues to mask felt emotional states such as laughing appropriately at a joke.

**Table 4:** Correlations of Dimensions for Mentees

	<b>EE</b>	<b>ES</b>	<b>EC</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>SC</b>
Emotional Expressivity (EE)		.13	-.36**	.35**	.08	.23
Emotional Sensitivity (ES)			.13	.49**	.08	.30*
Emotional Control (EC)				-.14	-.24*	.17
Social Expressivity (SE)					-.03	.49**
Social Sensitivity (SS)						-.51**
Social Control (SC)						

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As an additional step for data analysis, correlations of dimensions for mentees were also analyzed. We see in Table 4 that while some of the dimensions are positively correlated with one or two dimensions, some dimensions are negatively correlated with others. It is seen in Table 4 that emotional sensitivity is both positively correlated with

social expressivity (.35) and negatively correlated with emotional control (-.36). In analyzing the positive correlation, it may be inferred that changes in emotional sensitivity and social expressivity go together in the same direction (whether as an increase or a decrease). That is, when emotional expressivity level increases or decreases, the same kind of change is expected to occur in a mentee's social expressivity. For example, if a mentee's ability to express spontaneously and accurately, felt emotional states as well as the ability to nonverbally express attitudes and cues increases or decreases, the same amount of increase or decrease is expected to occur in the mentee's ability to engage others in social interactions. As for the negative correlation between emotional expressivity and emotional control (-.36), we can infer that when one-dimension changes in a certain way, the other changes in the opposite direction. For example, if a mentee's ability to express spontaneously and accurately, felt emotional states as well as the ability to nonverbally express attitudes and cues increases, the mentee's ability to engage others in social interactions decreases. Table 4 also reveals two other positive correlations between (1) emotional sensitivity and social expressivity (.49) and (2) social expressivity and social control (.49). In addition, we see a negative correlation between social sensitivity and social control (-.51). For this negative correlation, we can infer that when a mentee's level of social sensitivity (the ability to decode and understand verbal communication and general knowledge of the norms governing appropriate social behavior) increases, the mentee's ability to play various social roles and his ability to fit with what he considers to be appropriate to any given social situation decreases.

**Table 5:** Descriptive Statistics for Mentors

	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Emotional Expressivity (EE)	10	39	52	47.30	4.32	18.68
Emotional Sensitivity (ES)	10	32	64	49.05	8.39	70.46
Emotional Control (EC)	10	25	62	44.10	11.17	124.77
Social Expressivity (SE)	10	24	65	49.30	13.16	173.12
Social Sensitivity (SS)	10	25	44	36.20	6.32	39.96
Social Control (SC)	10	38	67	60.00	8.49	72.00

When we analyze the results in Table 5 which reveals social skills levels of mentors on the basis of mean score for each dimension, we see that the highest mean score belongs to "social control" ( $M=60.00$ ). That is, mentors in the current study seem to display a better performance in acting, playing various social roles, a particular stance or orientation in a discussion and adjusting personal behavior when compared to other social skills. It is noteworthy to mention that both for the mentors ( $M= 60.00$ ) and mentees ( $M= 53.77$ ) in the present study, the highest mean score among all the dimensions of social skills inventory belong to "social control". We may infer that both for the mentors and mentees, social control seems to play a bigger role in teaching as compared to other dimensions such as emotional sensitivity, emotional control, or emotional expressivity. The lowest mean score among all the dimensions belongs to "social sensitivity", which refers to the ability to decode and understand verbal

communication and general knowledge of the norms governing appropriate social behavior. It is important to note that when the lowest scores of dimensions for mentors and mentees are compared, we see a striking difference. While mentors seem to be skilled the least in social sensitivity, mentees seem to be less skilled in emotional control when compared to other five dimensions.

**Table 6:** Correlations of Dimensions for Mentors

	EE	ES	EC	SE	SS	SC
Emotional Expressivity (EE)		.58	.32	.86**	-.33	.60
Emotional Sensitivity (ES)			.61	.82**	-.49	.58
Emotional Control (EC)				.61	-.76*	.77**
Social Expressivity (SE)					-.61	.77**
Social Sensitivity (SS)						-.47
Social Control (SC)						

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In addition to mean scores for each dimension, correlations of dimensions for mentors were analyzed. In Table 6 we see whether dimensions of the social skills inventory are correlated with each other or not. It is seen in Table 6 that some of the dimensions are positively correlated with others. For example, emotional expressivity is positively correlated with social expressivity (.86). That is, when emotional expressivity level of mentors increases or decreases, the same kind of change is expected to occur in mentor's social expressivity level. Other positive correlations seen in Table 6 could be listed as follows: emotional sensitivity is positively correlated with social expressivity at the level of .82, emotional control is positively correlated with social control (.77) and social expressivity is positively correlated with social control. The only negative correlation is seen between emotional control and social sensitivity (-.76). That is, when mentors' ability to control and regulate emotional and nonverbal displays increases, their ability to decode and understand verbal communication and general knowledge of the norms governing appropriate social behavior increases. In addition, the correlation may reveal itself as a decrease in mentors' level of emotional control and a decrease in their level of social sensitivity.

#### 4. Results of the Semi-Structure interviews

Data obtained through semi-structured interviews were analyzed on the basis of three questions asked to the participants. Participants' responses in regard to the relationship between teacher's social skills and their own in-class teaching practices. During the interviews both mentors and mentees emphasized the importance of social skills in teaching; however, the number of mentors focusing on how important social skills are in teaching was considerably higher than that of mentees. Below are some extracts obtained during the interviews with participants:

*Mentor 1: "I believe that teaching effectively requires having some social skills to use within the classroom. We all know that classroom is a place where social interaction takes place. It is for this very specific reason that a language teacher should have knowledge of social skills, which will help him to have a better control of the learners and the learning process."*

*Mentor 2: "As a mentor working with language teachers for a long time, I have observed that mentees sometimes got stuck in the classroom. When we talk about the possible reasons for such difficulties, mentees mostly mention challenging students. I believe that if a teacher is equipped with social and emotional skills, it will be much easier for her to manage the challenging situations in the classroom."*

*Mentee 1: "Even though I feel that I have enough knowledge of teaching; that is, the strategies, activities, or methods, sometimes I have difficulty in dealing with some behaviors or emotions of the students in the classroom. I am sure things would be much easier for me if I knew how to manage my emotions and learners' emotions."*

*Mentee 2: "Social skills remind me of having knowledge of how to deal with challenging situations and students in the classroom. In my own teaching, I come across angry students or students who do not want to be a part of the lesson. I try to help them yet I know that I need to become more professional in solving such problems. Knowledge of social skills and experience of how to make use of social skills in our teaching would certainly help a lot."*

The second question asked by the researcher during the interview with the participants dwelled on self-evaluation of the participants regarding dimensions of the Social Skills Inventory. Below are some of the responses given by both mentors and mentees:

*Mentor 1: "I have spent many years telling mentees that they need special skills such as communication and social skills in addition to teaching skills. However, most of the time such talks did not go beyond mentioning general terms. When I went over the Social Skills Inventory, I realized that I am not familiar with some of the dimensions such as social expressivity or emotional expressivity. I think what I need is first to become aware of what we really mean by social skills- I mean the dimensions. If I evaluate myself on how well I am doing in each dimension, I can say that I am familiar with social control and I find myself much better at this dimension as compared to others."*

*Mentor 2: "Among all the dimensions in the Social Skills Inventory, I believe I am good at emotional sensitivity."*

*Mentor 3: "Well, I have to admit that I have difficulty in social sensitivity, emotional control and emotional sensitivity. I should also add that such a classification of social*

*skills and the way teacher candidates can use those skills in the actual classroom environment should certainly be a part of teacher education programs."*

Mentee 1: "I used to believe that social skills should be regarded as a part of communication outside the classroom. However, in time, I realized that the real communication takes place in the classroom and I have many miles to go as to improve myself. I still have problems especially regarding emotional sensitivity and emotional control when something unexpected happens."

Mentee 2: "It is difficult for me to evaluate myself on the basis of Social Skills Inventory yet I admit that I am good at social control while I need to work more on social sensitivity."

Mentee 3: "Regarding the sub dimensions of the Social Skills Inventory, I can easily tell that I have difficulty in dealing with situations which require emotional sensitivity in the classroom."

As the last step of semi-structured interviews, participants were asked about possible effects that becoming aware of their own social skills would have on their teaching. Below are some of the responses provided by participants:

Mentor 1: "Well, this study helped me to see what I am good at and what I need to work on regarding social skills. In addition, I personally became interested in social skills as a research topic."

Mentor 2: "Being a mentor for many years, I have attended many conferences and workshops and gained much from all those experiences. I believe that once I become aware of myself, I question myself more and this leads to searching more and trying more to become better"

Mentor 3: "To me, awareness is the key to development. Becoming aware of my social skills level in teaching certainly helps me to see my weaknesses and strengths, which leads to becoming a better mentor."

Mentee 1: "I believe that being an effective English teacher requires developing good relationships with students and social skills such as social control and emotional control would have a great role in creating a desirable classroom atmosphere. For this reason, becoming aware of my own social skills level would certainly help me a lot in my teaching."

Mentee 2: "After this study, I had a chance to learn both."

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study was to deal with the first step of a social skills training program for English mentors and mentees; and specifically search into English teacher mentors' and mentees' social skills level. The study yielded noteworthy findings that could be used in designing a teacher training program on the basis of social skills. Mentees in the current study seemed to perform quite well in acting, playing various social roles, taking a particular stance or orientation in a discussion and adjusting personal behavior to fit with they consider to be appropriate to any given social situation as the highest mean score among all the dimensions belonged to "social control" ( $M=53.77$ ) in mentees. Similarly, the highest mean score among all the dimensions of social skills inventory belongs to "social control" ( $M=60.00$ ) in mentors. It was also found in the current study that both for mentors and mentees the dimensions "emotional expressivity" and "social expressivity" share almost the same level. However, it is noteworthy to mention that social expressivity level, which refers to a general verbal speaking skill and an ability to engage others in social interactions, is higher in mentors (49.30) as compared to that of mentees (44.96). As for the lowest mean score among the dimensions, it was found out that while mentees seem to be less skilled in controlling and regulating emotional and nonverbal displays (emotional control) as compared to other five dimensions, mentors seem to be skilled the least in "social sensitivity"- the ability to decode and understand verbal communication and general knowledge of the norms governing appropriate social behavior. These finding are in parallel with the findings of Girgin et al. (2011)'s study where they also found out meaningful relationships between the items of the inventory used in the study. The study by Modiri (2013) which investigated social skills level of fine arts teacher candidates also revealed that teacher candidates' social skills level was medium. On the contrary, the study by Agbuga (2016), which investigated the social skills level of teacher candidates at physical education and sports teaching department, concluded that teacher candidates' social skills level was high which shows similar pattern in our study.

Another important finding of the current study denotes the correlations of the dimensions both for mentees and mentors. It could be concluded that the correlation level of the dimensions in mentors seems higher as compared to that of in mentees. It might also be significant to note that both for mentors and mentees "emotional expressivity" and social expressivity" are positively correlated as are "emotional sensitivity" and social expressivity". As for the negative correlations, the findings indicate that while emotional control is negatively correlated with social sensitivity in mentors, the negative correlation is seen between emotional expressivity and emotional control as well as social sensitivity and social control in mentees.

In the light of these findings, it would be very beneficial to add social skills training to the ELT curriculum in faculty of educations in Turkey. Such a training program or a course will affect the teacher candidates' awareness of social skills and readiness for the profession as it was also revealed in the study by Pinar and Sucuoglu

(2013). They investigated the effectiveness of a Social Skills Teaching Program prepared for inclusive classroom teachers. The results of the study indicated that Social Skills Teaching Program was effective on the teachers' outcomes and these effects were maintained after having completed the training. Moreover, many other scholars including Catron, Weiss, & Marciel (2005), Courtney (2007), and Miller et al. (2000) studied the effects of teacher training programs designed to increase teachers' awareness of social skills and their use of social skills within the classroom, and they all concluded that teacher training programs were effective in increasing social skills knowledge of teachers.

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